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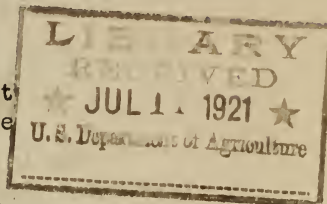
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

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Cooperating.

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Washington, D. C.

THE COUNTY AGENT

Some of the important things a County Agent should have brought to his attention before entering upon his duties in a county.



Some months ago a letter was addressed to the supervisory forces in extension work in the fifteen Southern States, asking a question to this effect: If you had the privilege of delivering a series of ten lectures to a group of prospective county agents, what ten subjects would you select? More than fifty replies were received, each showing considerable thought. One of the surprising features of the replies was their general uniformity.

For convenience, the replies have been grouped under nineteen headings and reclassified into five main sub-divisions, as follows:

I. As to the work in general.

1. History and development of extension work.
2. Objects and aims of extension work.
3. Extension ethics.

II. As to the county agent.

4. Qualifications.
5. Duties and relationships.
6. Personal and professional improvement while in the service.
7. Limitations.

III. As to methods of approach to his work.

8. Establishing contacts.
9. Surveys, studies, etc.
10. Plans of work.
11. Demonstrations.
12. Organization.
13. Publicity.

IV. As to lines of endeavor.

- 14. Production.
- 15. Soil improvement.
- 16. Marketing.
- 17. Club work.

V. Miscellaneous.

- 18. Sources of information.
- 19. The county agent's office.

The important topics given as subjects for lectures in the replies have been grouped, as previously stated, in the following manner:

1. History and Development of Extension Work.

Under this heading the following are some of the topics suggested:

- (a) The story of county agent work.
- (b) How Dr. Seaman A. Knapp started county agent work.
- (c) A study of the history of cooperative demonstration work and an analysis of its achievements.
- (d) Men who have been prominent in demonstration work.
- (e) Extension legislation - National, State and County.

2. Objects and Aims. The following topics were suggested:

- (a) Extension work in agriculture and home economics - Why, What and How.
- (b) What is the county agent's place in the scheme.
- (c) Extension work as a career.

3. Extension Ethics.

- (a) What the county agent owes to his position.
- (b) What the position owes the county agent.
- (c) What the county agent owes to his supervisory officers and specialists.
- (d) What the supervisory officers and specialists owe the county agent.

4. Qualifications of the County Agent. The following are the principal topics suggested.

- (a) Personality, spirit of service, college training and experience.
- (b) Qualities of leadership.
- (c) Attitude of the county agent towards his job.
- (d) Qualifications - tact, vision, enthusiasm, spirit of service, and salesmanship.
- (e) Personal equation and ability to sell the demonstration idea to the average farmer.
- (f) Kinds of farm and college training needed by the county agent.

5. Duties and Relationships of the County Agent, - These topics were suggested:

- (a) Responsibility to county, State and Federal authorities.
- (b) Cooperation with school authorities, commissioners' courts, commercial bodies, farmers' organizations, other organizations and specialists.
- (c) Planning his work and faithfully reporting results.
- (d) Relationship to home demonstration agent.

6. Personal and Professional Improvement while in Service, -

- (a) Necessity for advanced study after graduation through organized reading, short courses, and contact with specialists.
- (b) Methods for keeping up-to-date on current problems.
- (c) Keeping informed as to approved extension methods through extension literature, conferences of extension workers and visits to other counties.

7. Limitations of County Agents' Activities:

- (a) Some things agents should not attempt to do.
- (b) Limits in promoting organizations, cooperative marketing, fairs, etc.
- (c) The county agent's attitude toward politics and matters on which people are divided.

8. Establishing Contacts, - The following topics were suggested:

- (a) Proper methods of approaching farmers to procure their cooperation.

- (b) Plans for enlisting the interest and cooperation of commercial people.
- (c) Importance of establishing cordial relations with school authorities, rural ministers, existing farmers' organizations, and civic societies.
- (d) Getting a grip on the county by arising to the occasion in the presence of an emergency.
- (e) Winning the confidence of the people by putting across successfully a definite piece of work.

9. Surveys, Studies, etc., - These topics were suggested:

- (a) The first week in the county.
- (b) Getting acquainted with the county.
- (c) The use of the community score card.
- (d) A study of the agricultural history of the county.
- (e) A survey of the local conditions and needs along agricultural and related lines.

10. Plans of Work, - Among the interesting suggestions made under this heading were:

- (a) The necessity of a plan of work.
- (b) The aspects of a plan of work - How formulated; territory covered; time involved; lines of work; goals set.
- (c) The evolution of the county agent's work from personal service to group or community service.
- (d) The proper distribution of the agent's work throughout the county.
- (e) The proper distribution of the agent's time to different extension activities.

11. Demonstrations - These topics were suggested:

- (a) What is a demonstration.
- (b) Demonstration or object method teaching.
- (c) When does the demonstration cease to demonstrate.
- (d) Methods of procuring demonstrators, keeping records, etc.
- (e) Methods of extending the results of demonstrations.

12. Organization - Many valuable suggestions were made under this heading:

- (a) The necessity for farmers' organizations in the promotion and permanency of county agent work.
- (b) The county agent as a leader and organizer.
- (c) Methods of dealing with groups of farmers.
- (d) Relationship of the agent to the promotion, formulation and activities of farmers' organizations.
- (e) Types and functions of organizations - general and commodity.
- (f) The farm bureau - county, State, national.

13. Publicity, - These timely topics were suggested:

- (a) The value of legitimate advertising.
- (b) For the work's sake, keep the public informed.
- (c) A minimum of publicity should be given to projects and plans; a maximum to results accomplished.
- (d) Available means of securing publicity - the press, circulars, commercial organizations, banks, fairs, county tours, reports.

14. Production:

- (a) Crops - demonstrations in economical methods of fertilization, cultivation, harvesting, seed selection.
- (b) Livestock - demonstrations in breeding, pastures, housing, economical feeding.

15. Soil Improvement - Demonstrations:

- (a) Terracing and ditching.
- (b) Lime and legumes.
- (c) Crop rotations.

16. Marketing:

- (a) Purchasing materials in wholesale lots - fertilizers, concentrated feeds, machinery, binder twine, bags, crates, etc.

- (b) Commodity selling agencies - Wheat Growers' Association, Cotton Marketing Association, Truck Growers' Association, Citrus Fruit Exchange, etc.

17. Club Work. - Many interesting topics were suggested in this connection.

- (a) Production activities of club work.
- (b) Club organization.
- (c) Developing leaders through club work.
- (d) Relation of club work to the future of agriculture in the county.
- (e) Club work versus Smith-Hughes work.

18. Sources of Information:

- (a) Department and college agricultural bulletins.
- (b) Agricultural papers.
- (c) Selection of best text books.
- (d) Extension specialists.
- (e) Methods for maintaining easily accessible agricultural information.
- (f) Plans for passing information on to the farmer.

19. The Agent's Office:

- (a) Location, size and arrangements of the office.
- (b) Equipment - desks, tables, files, maps, typewriter, multigraph machine, book and bulletin cases, addressograph, card indexes, etc.
- (c) System of filing reports, records, publicity material, photographs, etc.
- (d) Method for collecting data and making reports.
- (e) Importance of efficient clerical assistance.